



Dr. Wayne Blanton

September 17, 1946 - May 29, 2025

Dr. Wayne Blanton (Sept. 17, 1946 – May 29, 2025) passed away after a long and fulfilling life. Aubrey Wayne Blanton was born in Thomasville, GA to Aubrey and Bonnie Blanton (of Perry, FL), but grew up in Marianna, FL helping his family run the local Farmer’s Trading Post hardware, farm, and feed store. He had a blessed and vibrant childhood with his tight-knit family (sprinkled with a touch of boyhood mischievousness – there are stories) and carried this zest for life with him throughout his life.

Wayne graduated from Marianna HS in 1964 and played both football and baseball for the Marianna Bulldogs. He progressed to Chipola Junior College where he earned his AA degree in 1964 and then continued his post-secondary education at Florida State University, graduating in 1968 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Special Education. Immediately after graduating from college, he entered the US Army’s Officer Training School in 1968 and proudly served his country overseas in Vietnam from 1970-1971 as a highly decorated infantry officer.

Upon his return to Tallahassee from Vietnam in 1971, Wayne served in the Army Reserves reaching the rank of Captain before departing. After this, Wayne continued his education at FSU and FAMU, earning a Master of Science in Education from FAMU in 1973 and his PhD from FSU in Educational Leadership with an emphasis on collective bargaining in 1978; all

while also working full-time and raising his family. He never shied away from hard work and life's challenges.

Wayne would always say that he was "a simple country boy," but he was so much more. His educational aspirations and career always centered around his love for education and being a fierce advocate for Florida's public-school students and individuals with developmental disabilities. He worked for the Florida State Department of Disability Determinations, Sunland Training Center for adults with disabilities, and 40 years with the Florida School Boards Association (1975-2015).

As executive director for the Florida School Boards Association, he had close working relationships with decades of Florida's school board members, superintendents, and school administrators as well as legislators and governors. He was an outspoken champion for Florida's students, staff, and elected school officials earning him the nickname "Silver Lips" as he was an energetic and passionate orator, especially when lobbying on behalf of Florida's public schools. He never met a stranger and always knew that if you could talk to someone long enough, you'd always find common ground. Upon his retirement, the FSBA building was dedicated in his honor as the Dr. Wayne Blanton Center for School Board Leadership, with his favorite quote, "Always do what is right."

Wayne was a loyal, supportive, and encouraging father and friend. He was always willing to lend support where needed with his family, friends, and community. During his lifetime, he volunteered and served on the boards of the United Cerebral Palsy, the Leon Advocacy & Resource Center (LARC), school-based PTOs and SACs, the Leon County and Florida Special Olympics, The Economic Club of Florida, as well as countless state commissions and committees on education.

Wayne never forgot his “country boy” roots. His love for the MHS “purple & gold” was for a lifetime as he closely followed all sports and events in Marianna; subscribing to the Jackson County Times so that he didn’t miss any hometown happenings. He may have had a heart of “purple & gold”, but he bled “Garnet & Gold” as a devout FSU fan. He loved the Seminoles through thick and thin. He would jokingly ask his children and grandchildren why they would even bother to apply to any university other than FSU.

Wayne loved life and was an avid traveler (visiting all 50 states during his lifetime) with the uncanny ability to almost always run into someone he knew no matter where he was in the US, and even abroad. He continued his love of travelling, reading, lounging by the pool, great food, and fine wine in retirement.

Although Wayne is gone, he will live in our hearts forever – especially when we retell his tall tales, dance a silly dance, and cheer the Seminoles on to a victory.

Wayne is survived by his wife, Sandra Cartee; his children, Kim Blanton Beaty & husband Dan, and Michelle Blanton; step-children Christy & Eric Taylor, and Donnie & Stephanie Griesheimer; grandchildren Allison Beaty-Campbell & Landon Campbell, Meredith Beaty, Erica & Luke Hedrick, Claire Taylor, Tres & Sarah Griesheimer, Bayne Griesheimer, and Elliott Griesheimer; siblings Fran Blanton, Travis & Susan Blanton, and pre-deceased by his sister Bonnie Alice Williams; and many loving nieces, nephews and lifelong friends.

His Celebration of Life service will be held on Monday, June 9, 2025, at 1:00 PM (EST) at St. Peter’s Anglican Cathedral (4784 Thomasville Rd., Tallahassee, FL) with a reception following. Wayne’s final resting place will be at the Tallahassee National Cemetery with a private family ceremony.

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation to Big Bend Hospice or Special Olympics Florida-Leon County in Wayne's honor.

Niki Carney of Bevis Funeral Home (www.bevisfh.com or 850-385-2193) is assisting the Blanton family with their arrangements.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JUN 9. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (ET)

St Peter's Anglican Cathedral
4784 Thomasville Road
Tallahassee, FL 32309

Reception immediately following the service.

Tribute Wall



“ *Audra Melton lit a candle in memory of Dr. Wayne Blanton*



Audra Melton - June 12, 2025 at 08:56 AM

LM

“ *My condolences to the entire family! I (we) were not able to attend Wayne's celebration of life but memories of his kindness and generosity will never be forgotten! He was a fantastic leader (boss) and friend to so many people! He took me in, gave me a job, trained me and sent me off or back to the FI Legislature! So many memories and so little space to share. You will Never be forgotten!*

Leisha McLaughlin - June 10, 2025 at 07:58 AM

LM

“ *Leisha McLaughlin lit a candle in memory of Dr. Wayne Blanton*



Leisha McLaughlin - June 10, 2025 at 07:52 AM

MV

“ Wayne was such a treasure, and indeed had silver lips. One of my favorite quips came before the class size amendment as lawmakers were cutting budgets, with Wayne telling them “stack them deep and educate them cheap!” Buttons sprouted up to the rallying cry.

He didn't win that battle but he won the war. He was more than an interview, he was a friend always there to help. Mike Vasilinda

Michael Vasilinda - June 09, 2025 at 11:20 AM